

# Thinking Social Service and Early Childhood Education in Brazil

Ana Vitória Gonçalves Caldas, Rosiane Rocha Oliveira Santos

Faculdade de Petrolina, Pernambuco - Brazil

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**Keywords—** *Children's Rights, LDB, Social Work,  
Early Childhood Education.*

**Abstract** — *This work presents the results of a narrative literature review, which aimed to investigate the importance of Social Work in Early Childhood Education. This objective is part of the guiding question proposed to carry out the research, which asks: What is the role of Social Work in Early Childhood Education? In this sense, we carried out a research with a qualitative and descriptive approach. The study analyzed five academic productions between articles and monographs and as main results it points out that the presence of Social Work in Early Childhood Education institutions can enhance the struggle for children's social rights and favor the development of a conscious and emancipatory education, thinking about comprehensive care of your audience.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, humanity began to develop its understanding of the importance of education in a systematic way and based on its own methods. This education begins to be offered in a formalized, institutional way and with the use of appropriate materials for the purpose of teaching-learning school-age children and young people.

Thus, studies on Early Childhood Education have been expanding in recent years with different approaches and from different areas of knowledge such as

Psychology, Public Management, Anthropology, Sociology, Law and Social Work itself.

These different areas of knowledge address issues that consider the need for professional training based on understanding childhood as an essential step in the process of sociability for children and respect for their rights.

Thus, throughout this work we make a brief journey of Early Childhood Education and Social Work, and then think about how the ethical-political project of Social Work can contribute to an improvement in this stage of teaching.

## II. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

Early childhood education is an achievement and a right of Brazilian children, it is guaranteed by the federal constitution of 1988 and the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) 9,394/96, despite this, it still has numerous challenges that need to be overcome. Such challenges range from infrastructure conditions to the professional training of people who work at this level of education.

It must be said that the challenges posed in Brazilian Early Childhood Education are still remnants of old educational policies, which requires saying a development of policies that over time were developed with different objectives, as they were either aimed at welfare and compensation, or they were based on the need for preparation for literacy, integral formation of the child, etc. (NUNES, 2009; OLIVEIRA, 2007; ROCHA, 2009).

It is not contradictory, however, if we state that the origin of children's spaces institutionalized as day care centers is also related to female work and that this view is also permeated by sanitary and philanthropic concerns. In addition, the emergence of day care centers had

contributions from medicine and social assistance, in which the work carried out there was aimed at working with hygiene, issues related to food and physical care, but the pedagogical aspects were not addressed.

For the wealthier classes, however, “kindergartens” were created, whose proposal stood out for the ideas of recreation and child autonomy. However, in the mid-twentieth century, while children from low-income classes are inserted in school spaces, showing an inadequate profile with regard to age-appropriate learning, pre-school becomes a stage with compensatory and specific characteristics. preparatory, in which this stage is assumed, aimed at developing the skills needed to adapt to the school routine that would be later.

To work professionally at this level of education, with children aged 4 to 6 years, the training required was only the 2nd degree teaching course, which enabled the development of psychomotor activities; on the other hand, work with younger children (0 to 3 years old) was carried out by anyone without professional qualifications.

However, in the second half of the 20th century, around 1970 and 1980, the government turned its attention to pre-school education, bringing an administrative concern, a concern that will generate interest in building an education policy preschool, aiming at legitimizing and organizing adequate to this level of education

In this way, the preschool in the public network expands, despite its compensatory character, which requires saying that there is an absence of the necessary attention to the pedagogical nature and also permeated by the absence of effective professional training policies, which, according to Lobo (2011 ) still entails a care and compensatory focus, that is, a neglect of “[...] human resources and the absence of government projects and proposals and the creation of training courses for professionals” (LOBO, 2011, p.141) .

It is in this sense that the 1981 National Program for Pre-School Education promotes a new function for the education of children aged 0 to 6 years: pre-school with objectives in itself, as it moves away from the preparatory function and whose focus is from the perspective of overcoming children's problems caused by the lack of access to other policies, in view of the conditions imposed by social class, which also requires saying that the pedagogical capacity was not required, but technical mastery and control over the children, in addition to the willingness to the performance (ALVES, 2011).

Still in this scenario, questions about which pedagogical proposal followed, the pedagogical resources that would be used, as well as the number of children in the classroom and, above all, professional qualification for working in day care centers and preschools, are marginalized.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, with the Federal Constitution (1988), the Child and Adolescent Statute (1990) and the LDB 9,394/96, the care of children aged 0 to 6 years in collective spaces becomes legitimated as a child's right to education, and this service is incorporated into education systems. In addition, the Statute of Children and Adolescents (ECA), created in 1990 to replace the 1979 Minors Code, brought changes to the treatment given to children, taking a more focused look at the full protection and universalization of social policies, also proposing the recognition of the rights of children and adolescents, people in a peculiar condition of development “[...] as subjects of rights,

In these terms, the reaffirmation of the centrality of education in documents and in the definition of government policies is strategic and makes possible a perception of educational perspectives that are simultaneously articulated, with the idea of continuing education in the first place, which overcomes the obstacles posed by the borders of times and places destined to learning, reaffirmed by LDB 9.394/96, establishing the recognition and certification of learning from spaces beyond the school space (ALVES, 2011).

In this sense, several policies related to this new appearance of the education system are assumed, such as reformulations in the production, acquisition and distribution policies of textbooks, assessment systems, curriculum reforms, teacher training, incentive policies to degree courses at universities, etc.

Regarding the understanding of Early Childhood Education in the Federal Constitution (CF) of 1988, it is possible to say that the FC brings a favorable discussion to the construction of an educational policy in the country, as it considers Early Childhood Education as a child's right, a family option and duty of the state. With this new look, Early Childhood Education leaves an assistencialist bias, in the daycare segment, to be assumed as a child's right.

This achievement is endorsed by the ECA, 1990, and the LDB. As the first reinforces the citizenship of the child and provides changes in the way of thinking about childhood in Brazil, as the second asserts early childhood education as an important stage in human development, which requires saying that it is this law that includes Early Childhood Education in basic education, determining what training and professional qualification should be carried out to work in the area.

It is true, however, that some works such as Corsino's; Nunes (2010) and Alves (2011), for example, celebrate the departure of Early Childhood Education from the sphere of Social Assistance, claiming that it is characterized by care. As Corsino claim; Nunes (2010, pp. 1-2), the Brazilian

system chose to integrate the care of children aged 0 to 6 years in the sphere of education, realizing that this “[...] is the result of a historical process of articulation between two dimensions: one social, political and administrative and the other technical-scientific, understanding education and care as inseparable, since the same act that takes care educates, the same act that educates takes care”.

### III. THE SOCIAL SERVICE AND ITS ETHICAL-POLITICAL PROJECT

With its appearance in the 1930s, the Brazilian Social Service took years to be regulated as a profession, as higher education was only regulated in 1953 and only in 1962 came the regulation of the profession by Laws nº. 3252 of 1957 and Decree no. 994 of May 15, 1962 (FELIPPE, 2018).

Since its beginning and regulation, Social Work in Brazil has undergone several changes to the present day, as in the early history of Brazilian Social Work, this area, in its philosophical and practical basis, maintained a direct relationship with the Catholic Church, in addition to being influenced by trends from North America.

Realizing the need for changes in professional performance, social workers over time have brought to the fore the importance of building a project seeking to contemplate people individually and collectively in Brazilian society and, thus, this project was called the Political Ethical Project of Profession.

This new project began in 1970, bringing as a historic landmark the realization of what became known as “Congresso da Virada” (III CBAS). After this beginning, the construction of an ethical-political project of Social Service progressed through the 1980s, when, with the end of the military dictatorship, Brazil went through the process of redemocratization.

In the following decade, 1990, the construction of the Political Ethical Project of Social Work gained greater force, even though the expansion of neoliberalism was under way in the country. In other words, the consolidation of the Ethical Political Project of Social Work takes place in a scenario “[...] strongly tensioned by the neoliberal paths of society and by a new conservative reaction within the profession in the current decade” (TEIXEIRA; REIS, 2009, p. 13).

In this sense, it is worth noting that the Ethical Political Project of Social Service is committed to a democratic project of society, with a view to guaranteeing the universal rights of its nation based on the Federal Constitution of 1988, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international agreements for the guarantee of human dignity.

In addition, the Social Work Ethical Political Project seeks to break the conservative practices of acting in society and in the construction of social policies. It is in this sense that Yasbeck (2004) considers that the construction and consolidation of the Political Ethical Project of Social Work presupposes the articulation of different ethical spheres.

In these terms, we can consider that there are many challenges posed to the exercise of social service, especially when the corporate project diverges from what is set and seeks to build a profession with a critical social aspect, as the need to build “[...] a role of politicizing and giving visibility to the interests of the subaltern classes and we know that the high technical quality of our work is not enough” (YASBECK, 2004, p.12).

Thus, it is important to consider that the construction of an Ethical Political Project of Brazilian Social Work presupposes considering some fundamental factors, such as, for example, the consolidation of democracy in line with the social issue and the articulation between Social Work and the Social Sciences, especially nowadays, when democratic institutions, the Social Sciences and the Human Sciences are threatened.

### IV. BUILDING A NEW SOCIETY UNDER THE VIEW OF SOCIAL SERVICE

Currently, many debates have been raised about Brazilian society being aligned with a corporate project. In general, corporate projects can assume a transformative or conservative character and, obviously, the Political Ethical Project of Brazilian Social Work is linked to the transformation of society and, in this sense, the professional project of Social Work in Brazil is effectively linked “[...] to a societal project that proposes the construction of a new social order, without domination and/or exploitation of class, ethnicity and gender” (NETTO, 1999, p. 105).

This link affirmed by the author is a requirement arising from the ethical presuppositions and the political dimension assumed in the face of the demand of the Social Work's own professional performance, but this also requires mentioning the challenges posed to the execution of such a project.

In these terms, the ethical-political project of Social Work is assertive in pointing out the social commitments of the profession, asserting its professional commitment in an ethical, political and social field that dialogues “[...] with the autonomy, emancipation and full expansion of individuals social. (NETTO, 1999, p. 104). In other words, the presence of the Social Service in articulation with other sectors of society favors the evolution of Brazilian society as a nation, seeking to understand the social issue, as well

as the transformation of the structures placed in Brazilian society.

Considering these elements, we can say that for Social Work to think about social transformation, it is necessary to think about an Ethical Political Project based on the freedom of people as subjects of rights. It also requires that this project be articulated with the commitment to people's autonomy and social emancipation, proposing the transformation of society through the construction of a new order supported by equity and social justice (NETTO, 1999).

In addition, it is necessary that the Social Service continually act to expand the social rights conquered over time, reinforcing the need for "socialization of the wealth produced and the political participation of the population in the formulation of public policies" (SANT'ANA, 2016, p. 28).

In addition, the professional performance to promote this social transformation through Social Service, it is necessary that there is a multidisciplinary action agenda in recognition of the agenda of other professional categories that act in defense and emancipation of the working class, building the confrontation to the discrepancies put forward for the social issue.

Such discrepancies are inserted in all sectors of Brazilian society, which means that one of the possible paths for the insertion of Social Work is education itself, also seen as one of the great possibilities of social reorganization.

In this way, the role of Social Work as a path to social transformation can and should be included in the Education Policy, acting together, in a multi and interdisciplinary way, as we have already stated, with a view to contributing to the transformation of social structures, guaranteeing rights, rethinking situations of social injustice and building an egalitarian society.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

We conclude from this work the need to create policies that enable the insertion of people who act as social workers in public education directly in schools and Early Childhood Education centers in Brazil, in order to guarantee the rights already conquered and face daily confrontation to the dismantling that the public service, especially those aimed at serving less wealthy populations, is facing.

Therefore, we can say that the role of Social Work in Early Childhood Education is directly linked to the guarantee of rights, which means that, throughout the work, we shed light on our question initially proposed in the research.

There are still questions that can and should be deepened in future research, such as, for example, trying to understand if the public policies developed so far favor this insertion of people who work in Social Work focused on Early Childhood Education and how they are applied.

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